

# New psychiatry residency program launching in Tallahassee



Health experts say the measure could be step forward in addressing mental health care shortages. (WCTV)

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (WCTV) - According to the Florida State University College of Medicine, one in five Americans struggle with a mental health condition which impacts their life.

Many people face challenges finding access to the care they need. A new psychiatry residency program will help address that.

In conjunction with Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare and the Apalachee Center, Florida State University will launch a new psychiatry residency program. It's the first of its kind in the panhandle.

The program will be based at the Apalachee Center, providing three years of training for future mental health care workers.

Center President and CEO Dr. Jay Reeve says as a non-profit care center, many of its clients are uninsured or underinsured. Having this new cohort of psychiatrists will expand access to critical health care for this vulnerable population.

"We're going to be taking the largest new infusion of psychiatric talent, as far as I can tell, we've ever had in this region, and applying that directly to folks who may have been facing challenges receiving care," Reeve said.

Reeve says this region is impacted by an acute shortage of mental health care practitioners. One major factor of that shortage is the lack of a residency program like this in the area. The program will help increase the number of practitioners by recruiting new doctors to train students, while also graduating residents, who doctors say are more likely to stay in the area.

According to FSU, 60 percent of physicians end up practicing within an hour of where they completed residency training.

What is more, Dr. Reeve says many of the practicing psychiatrists are nearing retirement.

This new residency program, he says, is a game changer in addressing the shortage.

"Not just having enough new psychiatrists coming in to the field regionally to replace the ones who were there before, but we want more of them," Reeve said. So that we can have folks who are seeing people from all walks of life, from all zip codes, regardless of their ability to pay."

FSU is working on recruiting a residency director who will be in charge of the program. They hope enrollment could be open in 2023.